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Recommendations and Responses to Recommendations

in the Report to the Minister of Education on the

Financial Administration of the

Northern Lights School Division No. 113

RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESPONSE	BOARD OF EDUCATION RESPONSE
1. It is recommended that corrective action be taken to improve the cash position of the Board of Education of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 through the more orderly and timely collection of Tax Receivables and amounts due from other school boards.	- Agree - Requires Board Action Department will assist and advise, upon request.	Meetings with all Northern Local Governments in the Division will be scheduled in 1986, to explain the position of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113, as well as the possible legal implications for communities not sending tax monies to the School Division. However, we feel this is largely due to a deficiency on the part of Urban Affairs, therefore, we suggest the Department of Urban Affairs provide training to local communities re: Taxation.
2. It is recommended that, although the tax base is very small, the mill rate be established at a rate at least equal to the computational rate.	- Agree - Requires Board Action	The Board is prepared to accept the Finance Review Committee's recommendation by incorporating the following formula into their 1986, 1987 and 1988 Budget years: 1985 Computation Mill Rate Minus 1985 N.L.S.D. #113 Mill Rate 3 Years + Annual Provincial Computational Mill Rate Increases However, total tax levy in the North, in any given year, is only approximately 5% of N.L.S.D. total Revenue.

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3. It is recommended that, based on the information contained in the 1984 Audited Statements of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113, a Special Grant be made to the Northern Lights School Division No. 113, in a manner to be determined by the Minister of Education, and applied against existing short-term loans, subject to the terms identified in Recommendation 19.	- See Response to Recommendation No. 19	See response re: Recommendation #19. Based on Education needs in Northern Saskatchewan, a special Grant should be built into the Foundation Grant formula in such a manner that quality education can be delivered effectively by the School Division. However, the financial position of the Division in December 1984 was at its worst position and it's unfortunate that the Review Committee mandate did not extend after 1984. Our financial position has since been improved significantly, but our educational programs have no doubt suffered.
4. It is recomended that the Board of Education of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 ensure that all school taxes collected on behalf of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 by municipalities are paid to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113, in accordance with the provisions set out in Section 286 of The Education Act.	- Agree - Requires Board Action - Department will investigate implications and possibilities for grants-in-lieu for non-assessed properties (mines, etc.)	See response re: Recommendation #1. - The Board fully supports the Department's position regarding Grants-in-Lieu-of-Taxes for non-assessed properties.
5. It is recommended that the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 adhere to its policies with respect to financial management.	- Department agrees that policies are well-written but MUST be followed. - Requires Board Action.	The Board considers the financial management to be sound at the present time. The 1985 surplus, in excess of 1.6 million, should be taken into consideration when reviewing this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESPONSE	BOARD OF EDUCATION RESPONSE
	Response to Recommendations 6&7	
6. It is recommended that the record should clearly indicate the arrival and departure times of each member of the Board of Education of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 and that remuneration should be based on actual attendance.	- Although there are anticipated additional board costs related to the distances that must be travelled to central office and the number of board members required for the vast area being served, much board time and expense appears to be related to administrative responsibilities rather than the goal-setting and policy-making roles which are expected of boards of education and which are assigned by The Education Act. - In The Education Act the responsibility for setting per diem rates and maximum number of days for meetings and supervision was shifted to boards of education rather than controlled by legislation and provincial regulations. However, board costs and number of days for which per diem is paid appears to be abnormally high. This should be addressed by the board. - If Recommendation 11 is appropriately addressed and resolved, there should be little difficulty in substantially reducing board costs in this area.	This matter has been addressed by the Board.
7. It is recommended that, in accordance with Section 89(2) of The Education Act, the Board of Education of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 establish a maximum number of days in any one year for which supervision payments may be claimed; such number of days not to exceed 24, and that payment be made in accordance with instructions set out in Section 89(3) of The Education Act.		The Board has operated in accordance with Section 91 of The Education Act.

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8. It is recommended that the Board of Education of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 discontinue the practice of making loans to members forthwith.	- Agree - Questionable practice - Requires Board Action.	The Board never agreed to such a practice, and it is presently not a problem.
9. It is recommended that the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association and Saskatchewan Department of Education Officials be invited by the Board of Education of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 to assist with the development of short-range and long-range financial plans in co-operation with the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 staff.	- Agree. Department is quite prepared to co-operate with Board and S.S.T.A. on this question. - Requires invitation from Board.	Financial Management is not a problem at the present time and, should the situation arise, S.S.T.A. will be invited and consulted.
10. It is recommended that the Minister of Education establish a Task Force made up of representatives from the Board of Education of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 and its senior administrative officials, Saskatchewan Housing, the Saskatchewan Department of Education and the Northern Area Teachers' Association, to study and make recommendations with respect to the above-noted concerns. (i.e. Staff Housing).	- Agree. Department is willing to take the initiative to establish such a Task Force provided both the Northern Area Teachers' Association and the Northern Lights Board of Education agree to such a study. At present this is an item in the local agreement and the Department does not wish to become involved in that process.	The Board of Education has considered this option, as well as other alternatives.

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11. It is recommended that the Board of Education of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 devote its time primarily to goal-setting and policy-making.	- Agree. This is in line with anticipated role of a board of education. - Board and administrative staff MUST take steps to define roles. Department is prepared to assist, if necessary.	Goal setting and policy making is an ongoing practice of this Board.
12. It is recommended that the Minister of Education assign Facilities Section staff of the Saskatchewan Department of Education to develop a comprehensive program relative to maintenance staff training and deployment, plant maintenance and the heating and lighting of facilities of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113.	- Agree. Facilities staff will work with board to develop program and assist with training when possible.	The Board is constantly improving the Maintenance System and further the Board is presently reviewing the Maintenance structure to accommodate Maintenance personnel training.
13. It is recommended that the only occasions on which the senior administrative officials should be excluded from in-camera meetings of the Board of Education of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 are those where the board is evaluating the performance and remuneration levels of said staff members.	- Agree. This is the normal practice and should be written into policy.	The Board feels that it has an excellent working relationship with the Senior staff.

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14. It is recommended that Section 113 of The Education Act be amended to provide for a Board of Review if requested by a Director or Secretary-Treasurer in case of dismissal, and that provision be made for the same protection as is afforded teachers in similar circumstances.	No amendment to The Education Act is contemplated at this time. However, contracts should be in place, as per The Education Act, which state conditions of termination.	Recommendation #14 applies to the Department of Education. It is beyond the mandate of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 to change this section of The Education Act. It is, in fact, a Legislative responsibility. However, presently, there are provisions in The Education Act as well as the staff contract to cover any unjust dismissal.
15. It is recommended that the Minister of Education initiate discussion with the appropriate federal government officials for the purpose of establishing procedures which would guarantee payment of tuition fees from band-controlled schools or federal schools in a prompt and orderly manner.	- Agree. Department will take the initiative on this discussion, but will involve representatives of board.	The Board of Education agrees with this recommendation and welcomes any arrangement the Department of Education and the Department of Indian Affairs may arrive at which will guarantee prompt and orderly payment concerning tuition fees for students under Federal responsibility.
16. It is recommended that the Director, in co-operation with the Secretary-Treasurer, prepare a written report monthly on the current status of revenues and expenditures and identify any areas of concern for action by the Board of Education of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113; and that copies of such reports be provided to the Regional Director of Education.	- Agree. Good budget control practice. - Staff responsibility.	This has been an on-going practice and further such financial reports have been provided to the Department of Education presently, as well as prior to any Committee being formed.

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17. It is recommended that recruitment procedures be reviewed, with a view to clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the members of the Board of Education of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 and its Senior Administrative officials.	- Agree. Clarification of roles and responsibilities is of utmost importance. - Requires board and administrative staff action.	The Education Act clearly defines the role and responsibility of the Board of Education, as well as the Senior Administrative Staff, and the Board shall comply with every section of The Education Act.
18. It is recommended that the Minister of Education, in conjunction with the Board of Education of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113, commission a study to determine the costs associated with the provision of quality educational services for pupils resident in this jurisdiction.	There are several recent studies either completed or in progress which address questions of quality education in Saskatchewan and, in some cases, with specific reference to the North. The Department would not want to duplicate those efforts. Any program decisions to incorporate and reflect these provincial initiatives should be made by the Board of Education. The Department would not see a further definition of "quality" education as its legitimate responsibility. However, in an effort to co-operate with the Board of Education to ensure the best possible educational opportunities for the children of the North in considering the unique circumstances and problems, the Department would suggest that its staff, in collaboration with the staff and boards of the North, continue to address the	It is recommended that the improvement of Northern education will require a joint effort by the Provincial Government and Northern Lights School Division No. 113 Board of Education, if there is to be significant progress. In order for the Board of Education to improve the quality of education and adhere to the recommendations in recent studies, sufficient additional financial support will be required.

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18. (continued)	question of the most appropriate method of financing education in that area of the province. Such a program was discussed when certain changes were incorporated into the Foundation Grant Formula. At that time there was an indication that subsequent discussions would be required. The Department would agree that these discussions should now continue and that in the near future a further examination of the various factors of the Foundation Grant take place with respect to the allocation of provincial grant funds into Northern Saskatchewan.	
19. It is recommended that: 1) In order to assist the Board of Education of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 to resolve its financial problems, the Minister of Education authorize a grant payment of up to $1.5 million to the division (as referreed to in Recommendation #3), provided that the Board agrees to the appointment of a three-member committee by the Minister of Education (one	1) If considered necessary, the Department will approve grant payments over and above the regularly calculated foundation grant. The amount of such additional grants will be dependent upon an ongoing analysis of the financial progress of the board and a regular re-examination of need. These extra payments must be used to eliminate the outstanding deficit and will be contingent upon:	The Board of Education of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113 considers the financial management, at the present time, to be sound and efficient and that the accumulated deficit from previous years will be eventually eliminated. However, the Board realizes that our past financial problem is largely due to inadequate funding for our Educational needs and, therefore, we recommended that the 1.5 million, as per Review Committee recommendations, be built into the

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19. (continued) member to be nominated by the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association) with final authority to control all budgetary matters of the Northern Lights School Division No. 113, in accordance with terms and conditions determined by the Minister of Education; or 2) In the event that recommendation 1) above is found to be either unacceptable or unworkable, an official trustee be appointed for the Northern Lights School Division No. 113, in order to oversee and administer the affairs of the division.	a) evidence that the board itself is attempting to address and resolve the problem; b) the board taking action and/or co-operating to implement the other recommendations; c) a supportive report being received from a provincially-appointed superintendent of education who will work directly with board and administrative staff in the period required to implement the recommendations contained in the report. 2) Hopefully will not be required. This recommendation is one that is being kept in abeyance by the Department pending information on the Board's fiscal status at the end of 1986.	Foundation Grant Formula, so that Education programs in the North can continually improve to meet the educational needs of Northern students.